



A new crop of doctors receive their white coats from the Xavier University School of Medicine

Friday evening, December 8, the Xavier University School of Medicine (XUSOM) hosted a gala event at the Renaissance Convention Center to welcome and honor a new group of graduates completing their studies. The entire student body attended, many with their parents that had traveled to the island for the occasion, to see the ritual donning of a white coat that signifies the eighteen graduates have completed very difficult studies and earned the title of “Doctor.”

It was a very proud moment for the parents of the graduates and the faculty of XUSOM, headed by Dr. Cecil Bennett, who traveled from their headquarters in Atlanta for the occasion. He welcomed the gathering and gave some words of sage advice to the new doctors, applauding them for their great achievement.

Hosting the event and acting as Master and Mistress of Ceremonies were students John Garcelon, and, of Aruba, Mila Ponson. Dr. Gil Apacible, Dean of Basic Sciences announced the graduates, who then chose the individual they would care to have assist them in donning their personally monogrammed doctor’s coats, a gift from the school. Dr. Gil also announced those receiving special honors for academic achievement. Maria and Daniel Torres traveled all the way from California for this occasion, and were thrilled to witness their daughter Carmen receive a plaque for not only achieving the highest score on the final Qualification exam, but was also honored for the second highest grade point average.

Hatim Karachiwala had the honor of Valedictorian, having received the highest GPA, and thanked the entire faculty, but particularly “Dr. Gil and Dr. Bailey” for having inspired him to academic achievement, and “making me the student I am today.”

Others receiving plaques for leadership included Nicole Woods, AMSA President, from May to December 2005, Ialat Raja, AMSA President, 2006, and Chinmay Dalal, AMSA Vice-President 2006.

Additionally addressing the gathering from the student body was Student Body President, Greg Peeples, who also received recognition for leadership. The Keynote Guest Speaker for the evening was Dr. John Lue, Chairman of the Ob/Gyn Department of the Atlanta Medical Center in Georgia.

The Director of Operations, Mr. Kanaan Baroud, made closing remarks, which reminded the graduates that with the White Coat Ceremony “You have not arrived, but only begun the journey that will last the rest of your life.” From the graduation ceremony in Aruba, most will travel to Atlanta to begin seventy-two weeks of rotations in various hospitals, which will truly train them to be full-fledged doctors. Mr. Baroud also asserted that being a doctor is a constant and never-ending obligation to continually study and educate oneself, and they are a sort of “detective,” learning to investigate the human body, and its foibles.

Dr. Gil and his wife, Dr. Bailey, Dean of Students, were proud to point out that this fourth White Coat Ceremony included their first Aruban Graduate, Marvin Eyre, witnessed by his parents Sandra and Mark. They all consider it a great moment for the school, and the youth of Aruba.

Parents of the graduating class and student body traveled from far and wide, as the 107 students of the Xavier University School of Medicine, Aruba branch, hail from all over the U.S. and other countries. Dr. Bennett revealed that the school, little more than one year after its inception is now host to a student body of 220 between both campuses, and expects that to grow to 500 by this time next year.

The staff of THE NEWS offers congratulations to the new doctors, and tremendous success in the future!